WHITEWASH
Selections from Volumes I to IV
HAROLD WEISBERG

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by Hoard Roffman

November 22, 1963

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new information. He writes under circumstances which prevent the tedious and time-consuming work of careful organization and rewriting necessary to achieve a "polished" book with at least the veneer of detachment and "objectivity."

The organization which Harold has thus adopted has been one mothered by necessity. He has simply chosen to tell the story of his quest for evidence, his efforts to dislodge the secret which the government has so long tried to keep locked away in its vaults. It is within this framework that he presents and analyzes the suppressed evidence. Ideally, the writer of nonfiction assembles his evidence first, organizes it, and then presents it in a systematic, coherent manner. Were Harold to refrain from writing until all the relevant evidence could be amassed, he simply could never write, and the information he has been able to develop would be denied to the public, its rightful recipients. The alternative has been to compromise the traditional notion of scholarly writing without in any way compromising the principles of scholarship.

Post-Mortem is thus a truly scholarly book, far more thoroughly documented, in fact, than most so considered, and presented in a truly unconventional form. The reader should understand how it came to be written before attempts to observe its voluminous contents.

Most simply stated, *Post-Mortem* tells of how the federal government suppressed, distorted, lied about, and sometimes actually destroyed the most basic evidence in the assassination to substantiate a preconceived and false solution to the crime. As in any murder involving firearms, the basic evidence is the medical autopsy and ballistics data; the fundamental goal of truth and justice is served by the fullest possible ascertainment of the cause and circumstances of death. No less was true when President Kennedy was gunned down in broad daylight on November 22, 1963, when Lee Harvey Oswald was accused of the crime, and when the Warren Commission was appointed to fill the void after Oswald's murder in the hands of the police eliminated an immediate possibility of a judicial resolution of the crime.

The skeptical reader may ask how information so devastating could have gone unpublished so long in a country boasting a free and vigorous press. These books have from the first always been available to willing publishers. That none chose to undertake publication and accept the risk of a substantial challenge to the federal

government which has grown so enormous, so powerful, and so corrupt, is more a sad commentary on the state of the press in America than on any flaws in the books themselves.

If the reader finds such a statement untenable, the relevant documentation on which this book is based is presented, in facsimile, in the original six books. Thus, the reader is free to study and form his own conclusions about the evidence, independent of what Harold or I may say about it. The courage and integrity of the press must be judged not by the familiar rhetoric, but by an intelligent evaluation of what the press had refused to print. The documentary appendix allow such an evaluation.

Until now it was impossible for Harold to assume the great cost of a private printing. A new improvement on the printing process has enabled him to undertake such a private printing, financed in part by the small income provided by the steady stream of mail orders he received for his earlier books, including the most recent, *Whitewash IV*. To pay the full printing cost, he will have to go deeper into debt.

The long-awaited publication of *Post-Mortem* comes at a time of renewed public interest in the assassination. Unlike so many of the irresponsible sensationalists exploiting this new wave of doubt and concern to make a buck, Harold cannot be accused of commercialization in publishing now. The private printing to which he must now resort at his own expense cannot yield a profit and could never repay the enormous investment which went into researching this major work.

However, the timing of publication is not motivated solely by a desire to inform the people. It is Harold's intention to inform people and their representatives, the Congress, so that the legislative branch of government can be in a position finally to do something about the terrible abuses by the executive presaged by Lyndon Johnson's appointment of the Warren Commission and commenced when that Commission decided to and did engage in a whitewash.

Presidential commissions have become an integral part of the growing authoritarians, the antithesis of democracy and individual rights, which could no longer be ignored by public and press when Richard Nixon applied his heavy hand to the course of its development. These commissions have become a device by which the executive avoids or covers up the most important national

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